

**Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board**

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**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY BOARD
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**AUDIOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE
January 15, 2005
MEETING MINUTES**

Committee Members Present

Rebecca Binge, M.A., Chairperson
Marcia Raggio, Ph.D.
Alison Grimes, Au.D.

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
Candace Raney, Board Staff
Lori Pinson, Board Staff
Ann Bollenbacher, Board Staff
George Ritter, Legal Counsel
Albert Balingit, Legal Counsel

Board Members Present

Bruce Gerratt, Ph.D.
James Till, Ph.D.
Sherry Washington, M.A.
Diana Verdugo, M.S.

Guests Present

Jody Winzelberg, California Academy of Audiology
Jane Moir, Speech-Language Pathologist
Dennis Van Vliet, Audiologist

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Binge called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

II. Introductions

Those present introduced themselves.

III. Discussion of Professional Responsibility & Efficacy of Treatment for Auditory Processing Disorders (APD) – California Speech-Language-Hearing Association Position Paper

Ms. Raggio provided background on the Committee's prior discussion at its July 15, 2004 Committee meeting wherein the Committee reviewed a draft position paper on Auditory Processing Disorder as prepared by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that the California Speech-Language-Hearing Association (CSHA) task force on APD, who was responsible for developing the position paper included in the meeting packets, had planned to address the Committee at today's meeting but encountered a scheduling conflict and could not attend. She stated that, in addition to reviewing the CSHA position paper, the Committee should read the Department of Education's bulletin discovered by Ms. Grimes, wherein the Department acknowledges that there are no established and agreed upon standards for diagnosing and treating APD.

Ms. Grimes commented on the position papers developed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and by CSHA, and stated that while the papers draw similar conclusions, they do not agree on the identified roles of the speech-language pathologist and of the audiologist in terms of providing APD diagnosis and treatment.

Ms. Bingea inquired about the Committee's action regarding the agenda discussion today and the intended goal of the Committee.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that the item was placed on the agenda to provide the Committee with an awareness of the CSHA document and to invite professionals and the public to address the Committee on the current status of APD practice issues. She stated that the Committee should remain aware of the practice trends of APD, as the Board may need to respond to enforcement issues related to unsubstantiated claims of favorable treatment results or of taking advantage of consumers by recommending costly testing and interventions that have not been proven to be efficacious.

Ms. Grimes recommended that the Committee develop an informational paper similar to that of the Department of Education to be posted on the Board's website. She recommended that the statement identify the available information on the topic of APD as developed by the professional organizations and the Department of Education, and that the statement caution practitioners about the lack of an accepted "gold standard" for diagnosing and treating APD.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that it might be helpful to remind practitioners of their professional and ethical obligations to carefully consider the assessment tools and intervention strategies they use, and to recognize that many aspects of APD remain nebulous.

Ms. Winzelberg inquired whether the Board would be taking a position about the available resources on APD. She proceeded to report her experiences with treating children in school settings and stated that, prior to reviewing the collective professional position

papers on APD, she had performed a number of APD assessments and diagnostic batteries. She commented that in learning more about the tentative findings on APD, she has since changed her approach to assessing children with processing-type disorders and uses training techniques to objectively define the child's problem areas, as opposed to labeling the child with APD. Ms. Winzelberg supported the Committee's efforts to alert licensees to the fact that there are valuable resources available on APD that provide a body of evidence in some areas as well as acknowledge the unknown.

Ms. Grimes stated that the purpose of preparing the informational statement is not to state a Board position, but rather to notify licensees of the information available on APD testing and therapy.

The Committee discussed a number of incidents in which school districts were ordered by the courts to provide APD testing and therapy.

Ms. Grimes stated that she would much rather have audiologists who are knowledgeable in the well-documented testing protocols and who understand the areas of weakness in the APD data respond to the court mandates for testing and treating children for APD, as opposed to those who establish their own "homemade" battery of tests.

Ms. Grimes reported that she has encountered a number of parents, who upon seeking services from her place of employment become upset if their child is not diagnosed with APD, as the child may not then be eligible for special accommodations through the school district.

Ms. Raggio cautioned the Committee that they might be challenged to pursue complaints of unprofessional conduct against practitioners who insist that their APD diagnostic or treatment methods are effective. She stated that she foresees practitioners arguing that unprofessional conduct cannot be established in a situation where professional standards have not been adopted.

Ms. Del Mugnaio agreed that the burden of proof might be more difficult in unprofessional conduct cases where practice guidelines are under development. Nevertheless, the Board could have a strong, legally defensible case in a situation where excessive amounts of money are charged to parents for intervention strategies that have not been deemed efficacious.

Mr. Till suggested that the statement developed by the Committee include some distinction between an acceptable approach to assisting children with processing disorders by suggesting accommodations that may improve a child's ability to function in their academic and social environment, as opposed to that which emphasizes a specific treatment plan based on a series of assumptions.

Ms. Grimes volunteered to prepare the informational notice regarding APD for review and consideration by the Committee at the April 29, 2005 meeting.

There being no further discussion, Chairperson Bingea adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

